

says she's quite good  
and the next thing i know  
she's in here  
reading & grading my poems  
mine are just slivers & shards  
bits & pieces that don't fit  
mole poems  
written with my hands  
turned bottom up  
under the weight of the sky  
she says they get a "B"  
i think she's a vegetarian  
and doesn't know that  
they're Grade A like beef  
to be ground round & consumed

#### KETCHUP IN KETCHAM

gene asked me  
to lay a flower on his grave  
which isn't much  
just a rectangle of concrete  
with the name  
and a couple dates  
close by a tree  
with a blackbird  
yelling & diving at my head  
every time i tried  
to get close enough to lay  
the weeds i'd gathered  
on the tombstone

i wondered whether  
he was really laid away  
down there  
under that rectangle  
or up in that tree.  
i finally managed to get  
the blossoms down  
& left.

driving north out of town  
i hit a dog  
ran right under the wheels  
nothing i could do  
but hunt around until  
i found his people  
& deliver him  
still alive at least,  
then stop by the salmon river  
to wipe the dried blood

off the car seat  
looking kinda like spilt ketchup  
that's dried on the drainboard  
or on last week's dishes  
still waiting there  
to be washed clean  
& laid in the cupboard.

# AT LEAST A BLUE GUITAR WOULD BE COOLER

over a hundred  
for over a week,  
with no relief  
& 3 house guests:

1. he's a fancy-dancer  
& almost won the pow-wow.
2. she doesn't say much  
but does do the dishes.
3. he likes wallace stevens  
& wants to take "nude" photos  
of me & my old lady.

it's hot.  
i'm sweating & trying  
to cool down.  
after i tell #3 that  
i can see only one way  
to look at a blackbird  
& that the only jar i ever saw  
in tennessee was filled  
with whisky,  
not much is said.

he (#1) tries to fix the furnace  
& offers suggestions for the refrigerator.  
she (#2) is gone to the laundromat  
with my old lady,  
who wanted to pose "nude"  
on the dryer for him (#3),  
the would be poet-photographer.

that's the way it's been going.  
the mercury rises,  
but life goes on  
like in a ball of snakes,  
you try to follow one body  
but you just can't do it.

-- Kirk Robertson

Fallon NV